



TRANSCEND
Translation matters.®

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LOW - L I T E R A C Y E D U C A T I O N

Is your English document ready?

You want readers to:

- **Read** your document
- **Understand** the main messages, and
- **Act** on the information!

Here's how!

Create an attractive, simple layout

- Use 12-14 point type. Use 14 point type if your document is for seniors or will be translated.
- Avoid ALL CAPS, excessive **BOLD** and underlining. When emphasis is needed, use bold, larger type or a different font.
- Use white space generously.
- Use serif font, rather than sans serif, for English body text.
- Use headings to set off blocks or "chunks" of information, rather than one long continuous text block.
- Avoid complex tables or charts. Instead, use bullets or simple graphics to present important facts.
- Use shorter lines. A two-column format is better than full page width.
- Support text with graphics. Use one or two graphics per page.

Make your text easy-to-read

Make it short! Limit the text to the smallest amount of information to get the point across. Keep paragraphs short. Limit the:

- pages
- words per page
- words per sentence
- multisyllabic words per sentence

Match the reading level to your readers' proficiency, usually 4th to 8th grade level.

Make it simple! Use conversational language and direct address (you).

Example, instead of: "Taking or concealing a child in violation of this order may be a felony and punishable by confinement in state prison, a fine or both."

Try: "It is a crime to take or hide a child against this order. You can go to prison and/or pay a fine."

Avoid jargon. Use common words, like:

Relinquish ➡ give up Execute ➡ sign

Localize. Use words your readers will understand. The California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) ➡ the State has a special computer...

Field test

There are many ways to see if your readers understand:

Field test instrument: Use an oral instrument to test readers' understanding of words, messages, and graphics.

Cloze procedure: Consumer reads document. Then, give summary excerpts leaving every 5th word blank. Consumer fills in missing words.

Free recall: Ask consumer to state all concepts they recall, without prompts. Tester notes concepts on checklist.

Miscue analysis: Consumer reads passage aloud. Tester notes mispronounced or omitted words. These are words or phrases you need to work on.

Available in PDF format at:

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